

AMERICANS have wondered just what was back of the defeat of Clemenceau for the French Presidency when he felt so sure of a unanimous election that he did not deem it necessary to announce his candidacy. This Paris writer, familiar with French politics, says that the French saved the world from another war by defeating militaristic Clemenceau.

Holds That Clemenceau's Defeat Averted Another World War

By PAUL TYNER

Paris, France, February, 1920.

THE election of Paul Deschanel as President of the French Republic caps the climax of a series of events following each other in swift succession. Once more the old adage, "it is the unexpected that always happens," has been verified. This time the unexpected has happened with a dramatic suddenness and completeness that leaves the ordinary observer dazed and wondering.

Yesterday we were on the verge of another world war, the horror and havoc of which threatened to throw into the shade the conflict which for nearly five terrible years convulsed the planet, taking its toll of approximately eight millions killed in the flower of their youth and twice as many maimed and mutilated, while desolating half of Europe and reducing vast populations to misery and starvation. And this new war, which clear-sighted observers like President Wilson realized would utterly wreck our civilization, reducing humanity for perhaps a hundred years to savagery, has been averted only at the last moment and as by a miracle.

Yesterday the stage was all set for the first act in the diabolical tragedy, which the dickering of our own politicians in regard to the League of Nations encouraged European militarists to precipitate. Clemenceau who, using his war prestige in the elections, had seemingly made himself master of France and planned to use his power as master of France to dominate Europe and the world, was about to ring up the curtain on the scene. Overnight he had Lloyd George summon from London Winston Churchill and Walter Long, heads respectively of the British War and Admiralty administrations, with Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of Staff, and Admiral Earl Beatty, for a conference with French military and naval heads to determine on an immediate and aggressive plan for military intervention in Soviet Russia. Simultaneously, the press of the world was flooded from the British Foreign Office by a line of red-hot, sizzling propaganda in support of this intervention under the thin disguise of affording military supplies and direction to Poland to press her "defensive-offensive" on Russian territory. The terrific menace of victorious "Red hordes" sweeping over Western Europe, on the one side, and "devouring the Balkans, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Afghanistan, India and even China," on the other, was painted in lurid colors in this "semi-official" communication to the press through Reuter's Agency.

On the same day, we had the news played up prominently that Secretary Baker, in Washington, was urging the turning over to Poland for her war on Russia, the fifty or sixty millions of dollars' worth of "surplus military supplies" provided by the United States in anticipation of the war with Germany lasting two years longer than it did, and engaging most of the ten million men America had under arms at its close. On the same day appeared the news that General Tasker H. Bliss had told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in Washington, that "the European war would probably be revived if Poland were not enabled to withstand the onset of the Russian Bolshevik armies." This, despite the fact that only the previous day the Bolsheviks had offered peace to Poland on the fair and square condition of mutual respect for each other's frontiers and political independence: the same terms they offered to all the Baltic States.

Declared a Clemenceau Victory Meant Crushing Russia

ON THE same day, Clemenceau had formally authorized his candidacy for the presidency of the French Republic and the powerful conservative and reactionary press, inspired by him, came out in flaming editorials exulting in the assurance of the "Tiger's" election and on the "tardy" rallying of Britain to the French Premier's policy of swift, massive and crushing war on Bolshevik Russia! The Parisian and provincial public had been subtly prepared for the coup by immense posters on all the dead-walls declaring it to be the duty of France to deliver her ancient friend and ally, Russia, from the grasp of the ruthless gang of scoundrels that had gained possession of the government by murder and tyranny. These posters were put out under the seemingly innocent and respectable auspices of the Alliance Universitaire Francaise. Arguments were brought forward to the effect that there was no health for France except through a restored and redeemed Russia, brought about by military intervention.

All this filled men's minds only yesterday. Today, we are told, almost in the same breath, that members of the British military delegation have deprecated the reports (really sent out, be it kept in mind, by their own government) of the imminence and immensity of the Bolshevik peril and the urgency of adequate military measures to be taken to meet it, as "grossly exaggerated"; that the presence in Paris of Britain's military and naval heads at this crisis had no particular significance; that Clemenceau positively withdraws his candidacy for the presidency and will retire from public life to write his memoirs at his place in Le Vendée—and that the Allies have decided to lift the blockade of Soviet Russia in return for a share of the accumulated bumper crops of wheat, flax and sugar beets held in that country.

By some providential coincidence, this tremendous reversion of the scheme of French and British mili-

tarists to plunge the world in blood anew was made known on the very day on which the League of Nations held its first formal meeting here, in accordance with the call of President Wilson. The Lords and Masters of Mankind seemed to have quite overlooked the existence of the League. It is suggested, however, that the presence of Viscount Grey, freshly arrived from the United States, and who had been in close consultation with Lloyd George and Earl Curzon (British Foreign Secretary) the evening before, may throw some light on the mystery of the miracle. Was he able to show the British Premier that the proposed embroilment anew of the world in war—a war hardly having the thinnest disguise of its real nature as a war of conquest and aggression, of imperialistic subjugation and exploitation in the interest of French and English holders of Russian bonds and seekers of concessions for the exploitation of Russian forests, oil wells and coal and copper mines—would arouse American disapproval? Was he able to make them see that at least it would imperil all chances of the American financial and economic aid so vitally necessary to save Europe from economic disaster and revolution during the next three years?

Pique May Have Played a Part

THERE are, however, suggestions that the sudden and marvelous transformation is due to no deliberate and well-weighed considerations, but to a trifling incident: to an outburst of personal pique, for instance,



PAUL DESCHANDEL

Whose recent election to the Presidency of France, defeating the Tiger, Clemenceau, is now held by the writer of the accompanying article to have averted another world war. Deschanel and Clemenceau had met before, under varying circumstances. Note the scar over the left eye. It is a scratch from the Tiger in a duel fought between the two 25 years ago.

on the part of the octogenarian arch-imperialist who in his blind ambition for power has shown himself so consistently callous to all humane considerations and that war had become his ruling passion.

Until three days before the election Clemenceau counted so surely on his election by acclamation at Versailles that he did not even take the trouble to declare his candidacy. No other candidate was even mentioned. On that day, when M. Paul Deschanel took his seat as president of the Chamber of Deputies, there was a spontaneous cheer among a little knot of his friends and admirers. It was taken up throughout the Chamber broadening into the definite cry: "A Versailles!" a reference to the approaching presidential election by the National Assembly at Versailles and equivalent to our "Hurrah for the next President." It was only when, following this incident, it was suggested to Clemenceau that unless he announce his candidacy Deschanel and his friends might assume that he, Deschanel, had a clear field, that the Tiger declared himself in the race. He still thought he had a sure thing. Next day when in the usual preliminary balloting in the Senate Deschanel beat him by a vote of 408 to 389, Clemenceau thought better of it and, much miffed, withdrew his candidacy.

Now Deschanel and Clemenceau fought a duel about 25 years ago over an article in "Justice," which the latter then edited. Deschanel received a rapier wound on the forehead, of which he still carries the scar. Men widely different in temperament and character, if not friends, they at least have not been enemies of late. Throughout M. Clemenceau's term of office, and especially during the recent electoral campaign, he has owed much to the sincere, ardent and loyal support of his old antagonist on the "field of honor." Nevertheless, the able and eloquent younger statesman has commanded the admiration and confidence of the country in greater degree than has the "Tiger." This popularity, having deeper foundations than that accounting for the pyrotechnical vogue of the "Father of Victory," produced a more unexpected challenge to Clemenceau's crowning aspiration. The Deschanel wave grew with such rapidity that when the Chambers met in the preliminary session (a sort of primary), he led the list, to the surprise of everyone, and most of all M. Clemenceau, causing the Tiger's immediate withdrawal. As Deschanel beat him by only 19 votes on the test ballot and there were 96 absentees, Clemenceau still had more than a fighting chance of being installed in the Elysée Palace. So his friends cite his withdrawal as an instance of great unselfishness on the part of one who has often been accused of egoism. It certainly was an instance of perspicacity. The Tiger knew that anything less than a unanimous vote for his candidacy meant that he was really beaten. He knew that men had begun to think.

Deschanel differs from Clemenceau in two important particulars. He is thoroughly well balanced. With fullest appreciation of French national interests—as is well shown in his latest book, "Victorious France"—he has shown himself capable of that larger and broader European outlook which Nicholas Murray Butler calls international-mindedness. As presiding officer of the Chamber of Deputies since 1912 (his second term), he has at all times commanded the respect and confidence of all parties by his fairness, firmness and grace. He is undeniably France's greatest living orator. Elected to the French Academy in 1899, he will continue at the Elysée the "Athenian" tradition of which Raymond Poincaré is such an excellent example. Besides being one of "the immortals," he is a member of many learned societies and as an author has some forty volumes to his credit, besides numerous articles on political and literary subjects in the *Revue Blou, Temps, Journal des Debats* and *Revue de Paris*. He embodies in marked degree the dignity, courtesy and *savoir faire* associated with the best traditions of French parliamentarianism. Equally at home in the chair or on the floor, as an ordinary member of the Chamber he has taken active part in the discussions, always favoring reform and democratic policies. Although allied with the Republican "bloc" which solidified the opposition to the extreme Socialists, and always acting in close cooperation with Clemenceau's recent political program, Deschanel has been criticized in the conservative press for excessive tenderness to the "turbulence of the revolutionaries." The Socialists—with the exception of two "wild men" of the tribe—voted for Deschanel.

Remaking France His Task

IN THE speech on his re-election as president of the Chamber, M. Deschanel outlined his program for the nation in clear terms and he repeated this program in substance when officially notified of his election by the president of the Senate. Among other things, he said: "The great task before us is the remaking of France, the achieving of the peace and the organizing of the victory. Our first duty is to establish the diplomatic situation and the financial and economic situation. The external policy dominates all: army, finance, constitutional régime, social régime. The French, it must be said, have not at all times paid sufficient attention to external affairs. How often in the course of our history have internal struggles blinded our eyes to the great realities pressing upon us! Close harmony with the peoples who have won our affection and respect while battling shoulder to shoulder with us in defense of Right and Justice; the strict execution of the Treaty of Versailles, of which the League of Nations is an integral part—this is the vital work which our generation must carry forward."

He went on to lay special stress on the need of France adopting even radically new laws to meet the changed times in the matter of improving the lot of the workers. "The force of a law," he declared, "rests on its justice, and no law in a republic is just if it is not fraternal."

Something of a shock to any reactionary tendency, such as Clemenceau's war policy indicated, was administered in the sensational elections. For the first time in its history, two Socialists have been elected to the French Senate; one of them (Fourmont) from the Var, the department which Clemenceau represented—in itself a rebuff to the "Tiger" who visited the department on the eve of the elections. In fact, the Senate has now become the more radical of the two houses. While the avowed reactionary groups gained only three seats in the senatorial elections, so that they now have but 80 seats out of 314, these parties, nominally at least, hold nearly three-fifths of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies.